

REMARKS

Claims 1-7 are all the claims pending in the application. Claims 1-7 presently stand rejected.

Claims 3 and 5 are objected to because of informalities; specifically, the phrase “may be” in the claims has been determined by the Examiner to be indefinite.

Claim 5 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-7 are provisionally rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over copending Application No. 09/973,808 (Tomiyama et al.), which has a common inventor with the instant application.

Claims 1-7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Sakamoto et al. (5,125,473) in view of Tomiyama et al. (US 2002/0043424).

For the reasons set forth below, Applicant respectfully traverses the objections and rejections and requests favorable disposition of the application.

Argument

In regard to the objection of claims 3 and 5, Applicant has amended the claims to be more definite. The objection is thereby obviated and the rejection should be withdrawn.

In regard to the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 of claims 1-7, Applicant is submitting herewith a certified translation of Japanese patent application 2001-040195, the priority document of the present application. Accordingly, based on the priority date of February 16, 2001 and the U.S. filing date of Tomiyama et al., October 11, 2001, Applicant has perfected priority and, thus, removed Tomiyama et al. as prior art with respect to the present application.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No. 09/982,750

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, the application is believed to be in form for immediate allowance with claims 1-7, and such action is hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, he is kindly requested to **contact the undersigned** at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



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